

Local Programmer Produces Sensational Software

TELEGAMES by Scott Lamb

Review by Barbara Cramer

"TeleGames is what you've waited for. The Future is here."

A little presumptuous, wouldn't you say? Probably just an example of twentieth century advertising 'hype', but, wait a minute. I can play backgammon, chess or checkers with a real, live person on the other end of the phone. I can hold a lengthy conversation with him throughout the game, calling him names and distracting his attention whenever necessary. Look. My family is coming in to join in the fun. A crowd is gathering around my computer. I'm not alone anymore....

This scenario is certainly an exaggeration, but TeleGames is the first piece of software to bring computerists together in real time for the purpose of having fun without sacrificing the comforts of home. Forget the bean dip and hair curlers. Now you can have a party with the Nelson's in your pajamas on the spur of the moment.

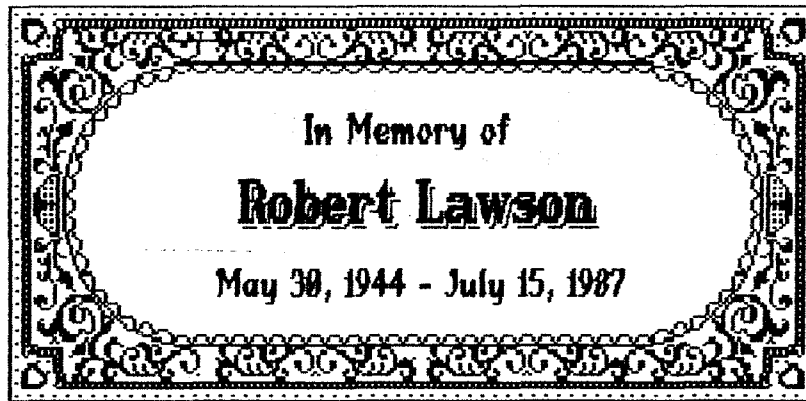
TeleGames is a powerful piece of telecommunications software which will allow you to play chess, checkers or backgammon with a human opponent while offering you all the conversational conveniences of being in the same room. The features of this program are so numerous, it's hard to know where to begin.

THE GAMES

TeleGames is designed for the Amiga with 512K of memory and is totally intuition driven. The screen displays and clear and artistically attractive having been drawn in medium resolution rather than the usual low resolution mode. Over 75% of the program is devoted to graphics and animation and the results are exceptionally smooth. For example, when you pick up a piece, it will move around the screen with your cursor until you release the left mouse button to place it on the board. Activities such as castling, crowning, bearing off and rolling the dice are automatic and smoothly animated. Digital sounds are also used to create a realistic 'feel' to the games.

At any time during the game, you are allowed to change the perspective of the screen display which is totally independent from your partner's display. There are both two and three dimensional representations as well as options from any of the four sides. The rules which govern all games have been taken from Hoyle's Rules of Games, 1983 and a good description of play and scoring has been included in the manual. The program will not allow you to cheat nor will it allow an illegal move. Just plain stupid moves are your own problem.

continued on page 2 . . .



Many of you will remember Bob's regular column in the newsletter entitled "Programmer's Corner." We are all very saddened by his passing.

TELEGAMES (continued)

Games may be saved to disk at any time during the play. This is particularly handy when call-waiting interrupts your connection just as you were making your final attack on the enemy. It is also useful for long chess games when your family insists you be present for last night's pot roast. The TG Game Files allow you to store up to 32 games for transmission and completion at a later date.

Playing the games is certainly fun, but the programmer, Scott Lamb, has provided us with the ability to talk to each other during the game. Located at the bottom of the screen are two conversation boxes which may be used to send and receive messages at any time, in any game. Not only does this perk up the boring moments waiting for your opponent to decide strategy, it makes the game more realistic, as if you were both in the same room. A pleasant bell rings whenever your opponent sends a message and the message remains on the screen until a new one is sent. Sentences of more than 74 characters will automatically be sent when your typing reaches the end of a line. As long as your partner can read faster than you type, long messages are no problem.

THE PROGRAM

TeleGames is convient. Graphics and telecommunication files may be copied to

RAM for faster access if you have additional memory. Telegames may also be placed on your hard disk drive. Icon driven utility programs and instructions are included to make these tasks effortless.

The program takes a little longer to load initially so that on-line game changes will be as short as possible. The TeleGames disk is not copy protected so you may use back-up copies for everyday purposes.

Telegames is fast. Each computer alternates being master and servant. In a test using two machines sitting side by side, set at 1200 baud, there was less than a one second delay in transmitting data, moves and messages, from one machine to the other.

TeleGames is fully multi-tasking, an essential for those long waits between chess moves. Write a letter to grandma or a thrilling short story when your opponent's conversation slows down.

To test Telegames ability to handle multitasking, I printed all 16 pages of the newsletter this month using PageSetter's Page Print while playing checkers across town with TG's publisher, Rick Bilyea. What used to represent two evenings of boredom watching the pixels print has now been transformed into a pleasant pastime.

While TeleGames uses a very large amount of memory, priorities have been reassigned in the games to provide for fast

and smooth movement of windows and game pieces. This is especially noticeable when printing a document; priorities are taken from the printing task and assigned to the game for the short amount of time needed to move a game piece. Printing then resumes at the normal speed while waiting for your partner's move. Clever, eh?

THE PARAMETERS

TeleGames is com-patible with any modem and may be set to 300, 1200, 2400 or 9600 baud.

Naturally, both computers must be set at the same rate. You may set the computer to answer or originate the call or you may choose the Null Modem Connect option - one computer mode.

A phone directory is available with 32 entries enabling you to personalize your disk with the names, numbers and specific

parameter information of all your friends. A games directory is also available for keeping track of 32 games-in-progress. All features are menu driven, fast and easy to use.

THE MANUAL

There's no such thing as a perfect software package. Every software publisher is forced to take precautions against pirates. It's unfortunate but realistic. In order to prevent duplication, the manual has been printed in light aqua ink making it difficult to read. Get out your reading glasses, granny! If you are lucky enough to get one of the first 1000 copies, you will have the added challenge of reading ink that was printed even lighter than the publisher intended. Ah, the joys of sub-contracting the work load.

The 40 page manual does contain a good deal of useful and supportive information. Besides the basic instructions for using each feature and menu, you are given the rules of each game and specific instructions on teleconnect procedure. Additional information is supplied for using a RAM disk,

a hard disk as well as a troubleshooting guide and advice on customizing the mouse pointer.

USER SUPPORT

So what do you do with all these features if you can't find someone to challenge?

Rick Bilyea, publisher of TeleGames and owner of Software Terminal, has added a special section to the Track II BBS he operates in Ft. Worth, Texas. Registered owners are automatically added to the BBS roster allowing 24 hour access to messages from other TG owners. Chances are good that when your friends see TeleGames in

operation, you won't have to look for a partner.

Both a message base and file transfer area have been created on Track II to meet your needs. Talk with Scott Lamb, TG's

The feature I like most is the fact that it brings **people** together, not just computers.

creator, look for partners, leave suggestions or just read the comments.

Above all, check the file area for updates and program improvements. As the need for program changes occurs, files will be made available to all registered owners for free downloading. You will even find one waiting there now.

CONCLUSIONS

I have seldom reviewed a program with as many high marks as this one. TeleGames actually does what it boasts, a rarity in any product. If only my word processor would do as much!

The feature I like most is the fact that it brings **people** together... not just computers.

TeleGames retails for \$ 34.95. (Ask Rick for the club discount and be prepared to show your membership card.)

SOFTWARE TERMINAL

3014 Alta Mere

Ft. Worth, TX 76116

Voice: 244-4150 Modem: 244-4151

Help For a Frustrating Problem

MY PROGRAM WON'T LOAD - WHY?

Greg Simpson Sixty-Fourum,**Jacksonville, IL**

Many of us have found a dose of disappointment when trying to load and run a new disk for the first time. No matter what is tried, the darned thing just won't load, maybe it's a bad disk. Maybe it's a drive out of alignment. Maybe, maybe, maybe!

Instead of a serious problem, you may just need to understand some of the do's and don'ts of program loading. I hope the following suggestions will be of some help to you:

1.) ".8" or ".8.1" -- that is the question. The normal method of loading is to enter:

LOAD "program name".8
or

LOAD "program name".8.1

Read the instructions that came with the program and follow them explicitly. Most commercial software requires you to enter the .8.1. If it does and you use only the .8, it will appear to load but will not run. If you have no instructions, first try the .8. If unsuccessful, reset the computer (turn it off, count to 5 slowly, then turn it back on) and try .8.1. Some people will tell you that every program will load with the .8.1 ending, but I have seen several that will only load properly using .8 alone. Also remember that files will load only if they are program (PRG) files; other types of files (SEQ, REL, USR) are accessed by other files and cannot be loaded directly.

2.) Fastloaders--at times the fast load cartridge may be the offender. Sometimes deactivating the cartridge will be sufficient; other programs require the fast loader to be removed from the cartridge port or expander board before these finicky programs

will load properly.

3.) Printers--your printer may seem unobtrusive enough, but it's just lying in wait for a few unsuspecting programs. This is probably the hardest problem to find, and it's the least likely to be the problem in my experience. I do know that a few new 64 mode programs we recently purchased will not load on our C-128 unless we unplug the interface cable first! If all else fails, turn the printer off, then try loading. If unsuccessful, disconnect the printer from the computer. If your printer uses an interface that plugs into the cassette port, this is often the problem. Either disconnect the cassette plug or the interface cable from the disk drive.

4.) Disk drive incompatibility--if you are using a non-Commodore disk drive, there will be some software that will not load. The innards of

the 1541 are copyrighted and cannot be exactly duplicated. Therefore, other drives will not be 100% true. If you are using a 1571 drive, some of the older C-64 programs will not run with it.

[Ed. Note: programs like Fontmaster, PrintShop and PrintMaster will not work on the MSD drives. The joystick can also be your problem, especially one that "kills" every other key on the bottom row of your keyboard. Or a light pen or any peripheral device not required. Reset the computer before loading with just "*" for the program name. Make sure that there isn't another file on the disk with a name like your abbreviation. Try loading from the directory instead of typing the whole command. DON'T spend all day trying, especially if it is a public domain disk. It may well be a faulty program or a faulty disk.]

This issue of
the MCCC
NEWS is
respectfully
dedicated to

**Dick
Barnes**

Editor of The
Amigan,
Apprentice &
Journeyman,
Journeywoman &
Journeyperson

CRYPTOGRAM

UGF APEGHUFN CPSSWFMU

FZYPQFB GTXQWZL GPIFN PZ

CWM APEGHUFN. OCFZ XMIFD

WK CF FJFN OPZ, CF

NFGTWFD, "QFM, W'E XTOXQM

AXMCWZL WZ EQ 'ACWGM'!"

TOYS LEADING THE FIELD OF SPEECH SYNTHESIS

Dan Gutman

Greater Omaha CUG

Teddy Ruxpin is speechless. A couple of years back he owned the talking, furry, stuffed, adorable toy racket. Now, there's a crowd of advanced, computerized toys jabbering away on every toy shelf in North America.

Although speech synthesis hasn't been perfected for computers yet, last month's American International Toy Fair in New York proved the toy industry is way ahead. Interactive, talking dolls are the latest craze.

This year Coleco's Cabbage Patch Kids can can talk. They are 'artificially intelligent' according to the manufacturer and they can carry on two-way, fully interactive conversations.

In addition, Coleco has put sensors on various parts of the doll's body. When you kiss their latex cheeks, for instance, they'll say "Thank you for the kiss. May I have another one, please?"

That presents some interesting possibilities if you think about it.



Worlds of Wonder, the wizards who created Teddy Ruxpin, now have 'Julie' who can be programmed to respond to your child's voice. If you talk about school, for instance, Julie asks, "What is your favorite subject?"

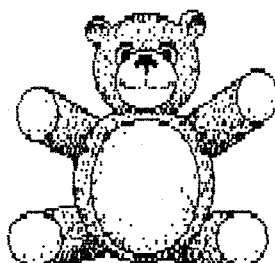
Kenner's new 'Amazing Friends' not only talk with kids, they even talk to each other! They come in pairs for girls, Trisha and Tooner, and boys, Bantor and Beeper.

Tooner will say things like, "If you want to hear a joke, press my blue button, or, if you want to hear a story, press my orange button." Kenner claims this "teaches the child to make decisions."

Hopefully, when the kids grow up, life will be so simple that our only decisions will be which buttons to push.

Then there's Hasbro's 'Yakity Yaks' - Amazing Bingo Bear and Amazing Montgomery Monkey. (In the toy world, just about anything qualifies as "amazing".

Franks "combine microchip technology with



the old fashioned lovability of soft toys." They each have a vocabulary of 400 synthesized words and you may purchase expansion modules to make them even more verbose.

Hasbro feels that the Yakity Yaks "will be excellent aids in helping younger children develop social skills." Here's a typical Yak joke.

Amazing Bingo Bear: Would you like to live in the forest?

Your Child: (says anything)

Amazing Bingo Bear: That's bear-y interesting.

Frankly if your child finds that funny, I wouldn't want him or her socializing with my kid!



Of course, there is an alternative to using computerized talking dolls to teach your child social skills. Tell him or her to go outside and play, preferably with humans.

**For the C-128
From Twin
Cities 128**

In direct mode type:
SYS32800.123.45.6

1581 Time Trials

Kevin Hisel
C.P.U. Connection

I was recently lucky enough to have one of CBM's 'yet to be released' 1581 drives, so I could re-write Disk Doctor 128, now available on Q-Link. While I had my hot little paws on this mini-marvel, I did some time trials.

Please note that the drive may still undergo some ROM changes before it hits the streets and these specifications are preliminary. All loading and saving times were performed with the 99 block version of John O'Hare's Monopole. The times were averaged between three tries so they should be fairly accurate. Validation was based on 600 allocated blocks.

LOADING

	1541	1571	1581
C64	1:07.6	1:01.1	50.3
128 Slow	1:08.3	10.2	6.1
128 Fast	1:07.7	9.6	5.1

SAVING

	1541	1571	1581
C64	1:14.3	1:07.9	34.85
128 Slow	1:21.4	57.3	24.13
128 Fast	1:15.2	51.9	19.92

OTHER

	1541	1571	1581
Validate	2:42.5	1:07.5	29.79
Format	1:14.1	42.45	1:38.25
Blocks Free	664	1328	3160
Pri. Files	144	144	296
Max. Files	144	288	2000+



The Guru Speaks

A cloud of incense lazily curls up toward the ceiling; in the distance a gong sounds and silence falls over all as...The Guru Speaks

Guru, can I take my Amiga to the beach with me? I have suntan lotion and everything. What do you think?

The Guru answers: I think you've been in the sun too long. Even though your Amiga is brought to life by electrical currents surging through silicon chips, and we all know that silicon is common sand but twenty times more expensive, your Amiga and the beach are not compatible.

Guru, sometimes I want to load certain commands to RAM, and at other times I don't. Also, sometimes I want to run screen saver or a clock like MEMCLOCK, and other times I don't. I want to avoid opening windows to get these options in order to save memory. Do I have to a separate Workbench disk for each situation?

The Guru grunts a reply: There is a short cut: program the Startup-Sequence in the S

directory to ask if you want to load commands to RAM, or run screen saver, or whatever. As we all know, CLI does not directly support such interactive interrogations. This is accomplished with the following:

```
INQUIRE LOAD COMMANDS TO RAM?
IF WARN
    etc.
ENDIF
```

This requires that the command INQUIRE be in your C directory - check the chapter library for the disk of the month which contains this command. Whatever you type after "INQUIRE" will be displayed, and requires a "Y" or "N" response (Guru will not explain what "Y" or "N" stands for). The statement ENDIF must complete those commands which are executed only if you have responded with a "Y". To execute one set of commands if you entered "Y", and another set for "N", using the following:

```
IF WARN
    etc.
ELSE
    etc.
ENDIF
```

Undocumented Commands for Easier Use

SCRIBBLE! - DOT COMMANDS

Robert Arnesen - C.C.C.C., Tucson, AZ

I've had Scribble! for some time but until recently hadn't paid much attention to it's Dot Command capabilities. It quickly became apparent that, as is usual with manuals, there is

a) some disagreement with the manual as to the way in which these commands can be included in files,

b) no real information as to how to construct a format file to include data on how to set up your printer to auto-configure when you bring the program up.

On pages 2-36 of the manual, it is noted that the formatting commands should be preceded by a period and that several of them can be placed on one line as long as they are separated by commas. It would appear, then, that they should be written:

.PO=xx.LM=xx(etc.)

Wrong! The only period used should be the first one and all the rest of them on the same line should not have periods. The examples on pages 2-28 are shown correctly. This is something of an inconsistency and Micro-Systems Software will clarify this in their next manual.

Printer Control Commands are also dot commands, that is, they are preceded by dots and it is only natural that one would assume that they work in the same way. They don't! They can only be typed in

columnar form. For instance:
 .#0/0=%27l6w
 (Expanded print on)
 .#1/0=%27l5w
 (Expanded print off)
 .#2/0=%27l2v
 (Superscript on)

These can be placed at the beginning of your file and invoked by typing ALT/G and then 0 to turn the expanded print on. When you want to turn it off then all you need to do is type ALT/G and then 1. Only ten such commands can be accommodated so the numbers following the pound sign can run from 0 to 9. The # sign identifies the code as one that will follow an ALT/G command, the following number is the command number, the /0 means that it is a non-printing command, the percent sign indicates that the following number is a decimal and the 27 is, of course, the ESCape code which must always precede the printer command code. These latter are Amiga codes and not the printer codes particular to your machine. You will find them listed starting on pages 2-31 of the Scribble! manual. Some of them may not work on your machine - for instance, mine is an Epson FX-80 and doesn't know beans about Shadow Print. So you will have to check yours out.

Now, about .fmt files. What you should do is type in all the printer commands you want to use (in a column,

remember), then go to the Default column and set the Top, Bottom and Offset margins you want the machine to normally use. Next go to the Archive function in the Default column and when its window comes up, click in the selection line and type the title 'Scribble!.fmt' - do not include the apostrophes - and Store it. This will save the file under the 'SYS' heading and it will be read every time the program is invoked.

Modifying this file is a bit of a problem because it is evidently compiled so you can not call it up and re-type any of it since it can not be read. What you will have to do is to get it again and re-type the commands entirely, including whatever changes you wish to make, and re-save it. From then on, those commands will be available for your use in any text that you write. If you have special purposes for which you need additional commands, you can save them in a format file with a different name and 'Get' it before typing the text. Just remember that you can not use both sets in the same text file.

Micro-Systems has also promised to improve their coverage of this subject in their new manual. That's great, but who wants to wait for it?

Publication for GEOS Software

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

By G. Keegan
The Com-Line, South Bay

We've all seen the page layout advertising Writer's Workshop. The headers, footers, double columns and graphics pasted everywhere in the document! Well it ain't so folks.

The Workshop consists of GeoWrite 2.0, GeoMerge, Geolaser and Text Grabber, plus misc. printer and input drivers.

GeoWrite 2.0 allows insertion of graphics anywhere on the text page, CENTERED RIGHT TO LEFT between the margins. (As

ALL GeoWrite applications allow!) You can have margins set most anywhere on the page, 10 to 70, 5 to 40, 40 to 70 and etc. But there can only be ONE set of margins per page. The text column can use all the page, the center, the right side or the left, BUT NOT more than one column per page. Headers and footers are supported, as is justification of text.

I have not used GeoMerge; it was not a factor in my purchase of

this program. The ability to import other word processing text and to paste graphics anywhere on the page were! As stated above, anywhere graphic placement is a PIPE DREAM, and so to the grabber. The Text Grabber is fully menu-driven. You run this application; it asks which WP you want. There are only a few, Easy Script, Paper Clip, SpeedScript and Generic. (There are one or two others.) Select the WP. I have not tried Generic, but as Easy Script is my WP of choice on the 64, I chose that. Tell the program the file name and soon you are looking at the file.

Margins and other paging controls are supposed to be translated correctly. My first try resulted in a



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40 column format??, and I wasn't allowed to change it!!!!?? On another ES WP file try, I got approx. 50 column format and printed it out and saved the file under GEOS and did some other stuff including shutting the system off. When I came back up and on-line with GeoWrite, I tried to load the file and it crashed the system repeatedly.

GeoLaser is a program aimed at Apple's Laser printer, and the disk contains an Apple Laser Printer driver. The Laser printer program allows multiple page printouts (in photography it's called a double or triple exposure), and when discovered, sends the photographer right up the wall...! AH-HA so THAT'S how they did it? ..Printed that double column page in the advertisement. Page one consisted of header, footer and a graphic or two centered on standard margin format. Page two, margin probably about 10 to 35 with graphics centered between those margins and page three, margins approx. 43 to 75 with centered graphics. Then the laser printer was told to act like all three pages were one and print it all out in one pass!!! So GeoWrite 2.0 CANNOT do that page layout, but it can be done with a Laser printer. Sorry, Not "A", but Apples's Laser printer. I called 'em and asked how much (a local dealer). They told me Fifty Seven Ninety Nine. Wow, what a deal, like CBM's 1520 plotter for only 49.99, when it was \$200 or \$300. Only Fifty Seven Ninety Nine I repeated. Yes, the clerk said, Five THOUSAND, Seven Hundred, Ninety Nine Dollars.

I dropped the phone. Turned out that was the price for the PLUS(?) model: a standard version can be had for Four Thousand...yep, never mind.

So, how did I do it? Created three (3) pages, one with header and footers and the graphic CENTERED between standard margins, page two everything to the left with graphics centered between those margins and page three to the right. Then get a HEAVY piece of paper and start sending it through the printer, again and again and again... That is operator cunning and persistence overcoming programming deficiencies.

Berkeley calls it a program capability. Let's hear it for Berkeley!!! Hmmm, Hmmm (censored).

Of course, if you can't afford a Laser Printer, you can modem your files back east somewhere (REM:Quantum Link) and get true LASER printing done for a dollar a page and get the product back some weeks later. Oh! Ho! Ho! Ho! Berkeley, you're such a kiddie! What do you have for us next? I'm sure afraid we gonna find out. So what do you get for your fifty buck program? The ability to do footings, headings, justify text, and very little else. HAPPY SPENDING!!!

1520 + PRINTER Mack J Biederman, COD

One afternoon, about three months ago, I had a phone conversation with a noted friend who, amongst other bits of information, mentioned that a 1520 Color Printer Plotter was available at a local emporium for a very modest sum.

Feeling that I couldn't live without a 1520 CPP, I rushed down to the store and purchased one. Hurried back to the house, hooked it up and typed in a few of the programs listed in the manual.

Everything worked fine, except that I couldn't use my primary printer without disconnecting the 1520 from my computer system. I also couldn't use the 1520 without disconnecting the Gemini printer....

At our June Meeting, the CHELSEA COMPUTER ACCESSORIES shop had a table set up in the rear of the room. The young representative happened to mention that he made up special orders of ports for peripherals. Inquiry disclosed that he could make up a box with one input and three output ports. I special ordered one and it finally arrived.

I hooked it up to the disk drive output and plugged the 1520 and Gemini into the front of the box. Lo and behold!! The 1520 and Gemini worked beautifully, with both switched on, or either one switched on separately. However, you must remember to direct your commands to device '4' for your printer and device '5' for the 1520. Chelsea Computer Accessories, P.O.Box 346, Culver City, CA. 90232-0346 Phone (213) 398-0913

THE CASE OF THE MURDERED DISKS

David Higgowitz

If you are a murder mystery buff then you will appreciate the suspense and intrigue surrounding the recent serial murders of a number of 5 1/4 inch floppys in the Southern California area. As early as October scattered reports began to appear in the local bulletin boards. It seemed as if one of the most used and yet least paid-for telecommunications utilities had gone berserk. The reports varied in detail as to the method in which the disks were slain but the instrument was always the same - a well liked program called LYNX.

Papa LYNX had travelled to Southern California via AT&T in November of 1985 and settled in to stay. He had been welcomed by the computer community and, as most good programs do, he began to propagate and by September 1986 there were seven new generations of LYNX, due the short gestation period of the program.

Then to everyone's surprise there came a much different sibling. The friends of Papa LYNX all thought that this child would be called Y8 just as its brothers had been called Y2 through Y7. Why would Papa LYNX call this one 108? Many BBS users suspected that LYNX 108 was "different" from the very beginning. All the other little LYNXs worked alone, but 108 refused to work unless accompanied by two elf-like machine language programs. Little did the computer community know

that the three of them were hatching the destruction of every lynxed file in Southern California.

LYNX 108 had a nasty habit of refusing to work unless the write protect tab was removed from the disk in which 108 and his two friends were hiding. This understandably made the disks very nervous. They felt quite naked without a write protect to cover their notch.

Then quite suddenly disks were found formatted while users attempted to dissolve a Lynxed file. The murderer always left a telltale clue. In every case the word "Boot" was neatly printed on the disk header. Word travels fast on the Southern California electronic bulletin board system. 108 was quickly caught, isolated, dissected, and banished to the deepest archives. In many cases capital punishment was meted out and 108 was either scratched or formatted.

One of the technicians dissecting 108 along with a well known "disk doctor" was heard to say that a subtle change occurred in sector 0 of track 18, the directory track. A byte in the vicinity of positions 179 incremented each time 108 was loaded. Could it be that upon reaching a certain value that 108 would self-destruct and destroy every program on the disk? One thing was sure. It was not by chance. To say that it was an accident of nature would be equivalent to saying that the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the

Comm'Putoy Cult

Vatican was created by an exploding paint truck - not very likely, to say the least.

Then what should have been the joyful birth of yet another little LYNX turned to sadness. Was this another cruel joke from Papa LYNX? Y9 was snubbed, ignored, feared, and scratched. A number of technicians began performing lobotomies of Y9, changing an ominous looking command "NO:BOOT" to a harmless "IO:BOOT".

What was even more sad was the expression of anger toward Papa LYNX. This could not have happened at a worse time. He had never made more than a pittance for the work that he and his children had performed during the previous twelve months. He had pinned a note to his youngest child, Y9, pleading for some kind of remuneration for the work they were doing. Now some of the users were openly scorning his pleas for help. They said, "Why should we send any support to a man who deliberately formatted our disks?"

Some users rallied to the support of Papa LYNX. Others said, "GUILTY AS CHARGED". This reporter determined to give Papa LYNX an opportunity to defend himself against the circumstantial evidence being gathered against him. Eager to clear his name, he immediately responded to our inquiries. Here is part of Papa LYNX's answer to the charges:

"Just after I released LYNX Y3, I was informed

that someone had uploaded a corrupted version of LYNX to the networks. The byline, freeware message and advertised BBS was hacked out.

"It is somewhat difficult to collect donations if the author's name and address is hacked out. With LYNX Y4 and on, a checksum protection routine was added to the program. If something was tampered with then it would erase the disk after the user dissolved the files."

Papa went on to say that he had requested both Q-Link and Compuserve to remove his corrupted offspring from their databases but that they had both declined to do so, even though the programs were a menace to the public.

He felt that if the

culprits who corrupted his children were found then we would have the real murderer. Papa LYNX would like to hear from anyone owning such a corrupted LYNX and to be informed as to the source of the files.

Note: this reporter has heard that LYNXs should never be allowed to get wet and they should not be fed after midnight!

Is Papa Telling the truth? Would he have asked the two largest Commodore Networks to help him retrieve his corrupted offspring if he was the mastermind behind the murders? Would he have responded to this reporter's inquiries by return mail and included a very special disk of other public domain programs written by him? Another question that you

the jury must address is the form of protection used in the file to preserve the byline and author's message. Did Papa have the right to put such an algorithm in his program or was it overkill? Your answer will probably depend on whether you are a pirate or a responsible user. There is a price to be paid for all our sins. Some apparently have begun to pay the price!

Any inquiries regarding the LYNX and the murdered disks should be addressed to Papa LYNX, c/o Will Corley, 7551 Twilight Drive, Sacramento CA. 95822.

Remember, whether you are a user or a programmer, and you think you're being ripped off don't just sit there and take it! FIGHT BACK WITH HIGGOWITZ!

DISSOLVING FILES

Jim Kaminski
SC Cubed, Sacramento, CA

The phrase "dissolving files" is not just another way of describing the erasing or scratching of files. Instead, it may refer to the "de-compiling" of files which were compiled by others. Now that you are totally confused, let us see if we can make some sense out of this.

In many instances it takes more than one file to make an application program work. For instance, a word processing program might have the program itself, a spelling checker, and a printer routine. There might also be a separate program to customize the program colors, and another program to edit the dictionary. If you were

copying these programs from one disk to another, you must be careful to get all of them, and hopefully not also copy the last report you wrote. If you switch to another word processor, and then a year from now have to go back and edit a file with the old program, you might not remember all of the files which are required to operate that old word processor. And the needed file might be on that old disk that was reused two months ago.

Or take another example. You want to transfer programs to and from a bulletin board or a friend. How do you 1) ensure that all of the needed files are transferred, 2) ensure that each file is properly named so that, if needed, one program can properly load another without error, 3) minimize the keystrokes required during the transfer (thus reducing the possibility of error), 4) reduce the amount of time needed to make the transfer, and 5) possibly minimize the amount of disk space used. One answer to all of these concerns is to use a file compiler or file archiver.

For Commodore computers there are three common file compiler standards being used today: Library, Lynx, and ARC. None of them are commercial products: Library is in the public domain and the others are considered shareware. They all have the ability to take a specified group of files and tie them together somehow into just one file. Thus only one file must be copied from disk to disk or via telecommunications. The compiled file can then be broken apart into the individual files at its destination when needed. The compiled file can be recognized by its file name: Library files have a suffix of .lbr, Lynx files use .lnx, and ARC files have .arc on the end.

It appears that Library was the first compiler available (mid 1985). It generally uses BASIC to read each file and then write it to the compiled file, one file after another, but only after writing an overall contents section first (containing the original file names and lengths). This means that the process is slow, but that it can work with any type of disk drive. The most bug-free is version 5.2 (although versions 7, 8.6, and 9 do exist, they have many programming errors when multiple drives are used, and their encoding precludes easy corrections). Because Library is used with a second drive, the only limitation is disk space, be it 168k on the 1541 drive or 1.2M on the SFD. Except in unusual cases, Library does NOT shorten the disk space used by the files.

Lynx came out next (late 1985). Its method of linking files involves editing the track and sector links of the selected programs so that the DOS believes that only one huge file exists. It too has a contents section which retains information on the original files. Since Lynx does not actually write out each file, it is faster than Library, but it has the disadvantage of working on only 1541 drives (or ones which are VERY compatible). Generally it is limited only by disk space (168K) and can compile or dissolve an entire disk at one time. It

You are enjoying a full issue of the MCCC NEWS due to the efforts of JOHN MALSTROM and DON LAINGOR. Thank you for the extra help.

Barbara Cramer

does NOT shorten the disk space used by the files. The current version is Lynx X, although Lynx IX might be preferable. It appears that Lynx was upgraded to avoid some problems created by certain terminal programs and when using the XMODEM transfer protocol. However, in doing so the program became an orphan: Lynx IX will dissolve Lynx X files, but not the other way around. Lynx also has colorful history, having been used, abused, copy-protected, and considered as both tollware and shareware. Text files are around which explain the various sides to the "Lynxgate" issue.

ARC is an abbreviation of archive, which is the name of a file compiler first developed for IBM PC-type computers. However, the Commodore version of ARC is much more than a file compiler. It is actually a type of operating system which as some of the functions and also the "feel" of MS-DOS used by the IBM-type computers. ARC includes a simple text editor and allows for moving files between drives, identification of drives by a letter prefix (a:, b:, etc.), the listing of sequential files by the command TYPE, and so forth. The fact it can both combine and compress files is just a sample of ARC's many features. ARC supports most all drives for the C-64, including IEEE drives (SFD, etc.) and multiple drives through device number 11. It is not as fast as Lynx because it, like Library, must both read and write each of the selected files. The current version is 2.30 and is the most bug-free effort to date. Some of the

earlier features (such as encryption) have been removed, but in general the latest version can handle files combined under earlier versions. The size savings of ARC-compressed files is impressive; a text file was changed from 164 blocks in length to a mere 62 blocks by crunching.

ARC also has a disadvantage when compared with the other programs in that it is NOT menu driven; each action is controlled by typing a specific command such as:

```
arc/c ctext.arc a:text
```

This will compress the file named "text" on drive 0 of device 8 into a file named "text.arc" on drive 0 of device 9. ARC also has problems with the use of spaces in file names because of the way it interprets its commands. However, there is another set of programs called ARCAID (version 6 is the latest) which act as a shell to provide a menu selection of ARC's commands. Furthermore, one of these programs includes an option to produce an ARC-type file which loads like a normal BASIC program and creates the required files on disk when the RUN command is typed. These types of files are known as SDA (Self-dissolving ARC) files.

For those who do not wish to use ARC, another option exists for reducing the length of a file. SQ and USQ are a pair of programs which squeeze and un-squeeze files to reduce their length. First made available in late 1985, current version is 2.0 and files squeezed by this method can be recognized by a prefix of q/ in the name file. The 164 block text file was squeezed down to 76 blocks by this program. SQ and USQ work with virtually all disk drives and are limited only by disk space.

There are probably other methods available for this method of file manipulation, but the above are commonly used techniques. These file compilers are not generally known of by non-telecommunicators, but hopefully this article will help to change that, allowing more computer users to "dissolve files."

SUPER SNAPSHOT

Review by Bob Lindstrom
Quantumlink

Ever since the windfall success of Epyx's FastLoad, manufacturers of utility cartridges for the C-64 have been trying to outdo each other by cramming more and more features into those little black boxes. Fast loaders, machine language monitors, Centronics ports, menu programs - eventually all C-64 owners may own a utility cartridge about the size of a Subaru that has everything up to and including your lunch menu for July 27, 2046. LMS Technologies of Canada and Kracker Jax of the USA have put their heads together and come up with Super Snapshot (SS), a utility cartridge that includes a fast loader, a DOS wedge, a screen dump utility, a machine language monitor and a memory capture utility.

Super Snapshot plugs into the cartridge port on the C-64 and the C-128. Like the other C-64 utility cartridges on the market, SS locks out the C-128 mode

Continued on next page...

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Super Snapshot Continued...

and will have to be removed from C-128's when you want to use the 128 side of your computer.

When you first turn on your C-64, SS intervenes and places a menu on-screen which provides access to its many features. Included is the option to lock out the SS in order to boot programs that will not load with the cartridge in place (I found VERY few). When you are in BASIC, pressing a small button on the cartridge returns you to the SS menus.

Since the features of SS all work well, a simple description of them should suffice here.

The DOS wedge provides single keystroke alternatives for common commands:

- \$ - list directory
- / - load BASIC program
- % - Load machine language program
- > or ' - OPEN or CLOSE disk I/O
- >#8/9 - change boot drive
- >TD - disable fast load (Turbo DOS)
- >TE - enable fast load
- >Q - disable DOS wedge

The Code Inspector #2 machine language monitor allows users to break into any program running on the C-64 and look at memory. The monitor incorporates such commands as disassemble, assemble, memory modify, compare and many others.

The Photo-Copy screen dump sends any high-resolution or text screen to your printer. On my C. Itoh (using the Device One graphic interface), the picture was rather small but well reproduced. Photo-Copy will not dump screens of redefined graphic characters. That feature is planned for a ROM upgrade to SS.

As convenient as the above features are, most users will use (or misuse) the Snapshot capabilities of SS. Compared to other memory capture utilities that have been released for the C-64, SS is fast and extremely easy to use. In most cases, you'll load a program, press the button on the SS cartridge, tell it to capture the memory, fill in a few filenames and (in about three minutes) you'll have an unprotected copy of the program in disk files. A software user's dream, a software developer's nightmare.

However, though it could be a boon to piracy, SS does have legitimate uses. Anyone who has waited minutes to load a

copy-protected program will recognize the value of having the program in unprotected disk file. I have used SS on several of my programs just to pick up the increase in boot speed which the files allow. And a recent shipment of cassette-based game software from Europe was moved conveniently to disk with the help of my SS.

I found SS to be a powerhouse memory capture tool. My success rate has been 80 percent or better. But be aware of this warning. Like all memory capture utilities, SS works only with programs that load completely into memory and do not employ part of the disk drive memory to store the program. It may be possible to snapshot programs that access the disk but it will be necessary to have your original program disk in the drive at all times.

For those programs that cannot be copied with SS, the package includes a Kracker Jax disk with copy parameters. This will make the package more attractive to many users. But frankly, the presence of the Kracker Jax disk puts peculiar emphasis on the copying aspects of SS.

There's no need to be coy here. Many people are going to use this cartridge to steal commercial software. Adding the Kracker Jax disk only underlines the clandestine capabilities of the cartridge. Hint, hint, nudge, nudge, say no more. And its a sneaky way to "hook" folks on the Kracker Jax series.

Nonetheless, whether your motives are murky as a swamp or pure as molten silicon, Super Snapshot is an excellent product and an invaluable utility in the day to day use of your C-64/C-128. I recommend it.

Super Snapshot is available in the USA for \$ 49.95 from:

Computer Mart, Dept. G
2700 N.E. Anderson Rd.
Vancouver, WA 98661



CHAPTER NEWS

Fort Worth Chapter

Our thanks to Rick South, who gave an interesting demonstration at the July meeting. Rick described how he used three commercial programs to generate animated graphics on the C64, then wired the computer to a VCR and taped his cartoons.

At our August meeting, Larry Ford will demonstrate the use of a MIDI interface and synthesizers with the C128. All musicians, take note! The meeting will be Saturday, August 8, 1:30 p.m. at G. D.R. A. on Bryant Irvin Rd.

Amiga Chapter News Rick Schulz

Our July meeting featured representatives from Disk Publishers Inc., who demonstrated their new product: "Aladdin", an interactive magazine on a floppy. The idea is new, the product is good, and the cost for the a one year, six issue subscription costs \$79.00. See Bill Raecke for details.

At the August meeting our members will see a demonstration of the Midi interface and keyboard used by the various music programs.

If you don't show up, you can't win. Door prizes are given out each month awarded to a club member by drawing names from a box. In August, a disk from Disk Publishers, Inc. will be one of the door prizes. Come and enjoy the evening even if you don't win. And, as always, the Amiga Chapter extends its thanks to Richard Bilyea for donating the door prizes.

And another famous quote: "WE'RE NUMBER ONE!" On Thursday June 18, member #100 joined the chapter, making the Amiga Chapter the largest chapter in the club. As our chapter grows, your executive officers will work harder to present the best program possible, with your support, of course.

As a reminder, our meetings begin at 7 p.m., with the business meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. With your cooperation, the business meeting will last fifteen to twenty minutes, with the rest of the time devoted to the month's presentation. If you need copies of the disks of the month, past or present, please come early to avoid the last minute rush.

Cryptogram Answer

The computer hobbyist enjoyed playing poker on his computer. When asked if he ever won, he replied, "Yes, I'm always cashing in my chips."

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AUGUST CALENDAR

Aug. 1 **Executive Board Mtg.**, 10:00 am
Western Hills Inn, Euless

Aug. 8 **Ft. Worth Chapter** 1:30 pm
Gen. Dyn. Rec. Area, Room 2

Grand Prairie Chapter, 1:30 pm
Grand Prairie Public Library

Aug. 15 **HEB Chapter Meeting**, 1:30 pm
Hurst Civic Ctr., 700 Mary Dr.

Aug. 17 **Ft. Worth Night Chapter**, 6:30 pm
St. Elisabeth Epis. Church

Aug. 18 **Arlington Chapter Mtg.**, 6:30 pm
Arlington Community Center

Grand Prairie Chapter, 6:30 pm
Grand Prairie Public Library

Aug. 20 **Amiga Chapter Mtg.**, 7:30 pm
Arlington Community Center

Sep. 5 **Executive Board Mtg.**, 10:00 am
Western Hills Inn, Euless

Sep. 12 **Ft. Worth Chapter**, 1:30 pm
Gen. Dyn. Rec. Area, Room 2

NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING:

October 24 at 1:30 pm
Arlington Convention Center

MCCC NEWS

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